

the past quarter decade have enabled for so many other families.

#### IMPORTANCE OF HOUSING

### HON. KWANZA HALL

OF GEORGIA

IN THE HOUSE OF REPRESENTATIVES

*Thursday, December 17, 2020*

Mr. HALL. Madam Speaker, I rise today to speak about the importance of housing.

Housing is a basic human necessity.

Across our country, housing affordability is among the most difficult challenges facing cities today.

The metropolitan Atlanta region is no exception.

In 2017, Atlanta was the third fastest growing metropolitan region in the U.S.

If we want to fulfill our most basic promise on achieving the American Dream, then we must make affordable housing opportunities a reality.

A rule of personal bookkeeping is that you should spend no more than 30 percent of your income on housing.

But in many places, that cost is too high.

For many still, who cannot these rates, we must make public housing more affordable.

In Atlanta, we have a tremendous opportunity to expedite the redevelopment of vacant public housing sites including: Bowen Homes, Bankhead Court, Hollywood court, Harris Homes, Thomasville, and Jonesboro North and South.

All of these sites have the potential to not only incorporate affordable housing, but the addition of grocery stores in food desserts; healthcare facilities, improved access to public transportation; job and commercial centers, quality schools and parks and greenspace.

We have seen this model created in other development projects including the Bedford Pines transformation into City Lights, Eastlake, Centennial Place and the newly renovated Wheat Street Towers.

The activation of these vacant sites could create thousands of units of affordable housing—ensuring that one's zip code does not determine their economic mobility.

#### IN HONOR OF BILL WARD, JR.

### HON. JOHN JOYCE

OF PENNSYLVANIA

IN THE HOUSE OF REPRESENTATIVES

*Thursday, December 17, 2020*

Mr. JOYCE of Pennsylvania. Madam Speaker, I rise today to recognize Bill Ward, Jr. of Blair County, Pennsylvania for his service to Pennsylvania's 13th Congressional District on the 2020 U.S. Service Academy Nomination Committee.

Nominating exceptional candidates to attend our nation's service academies is one of my most important responsibilities in Congress. During this process, I rely on members of the Service Academy Nomination Committee, which is comprised of dedicated volunteers who have served our nation with distinction.

Bill is one of nine academy alumni who graciously volunteered their time to meet with and evaluate perspective nominees for the Class of 2025. As a graduate of the U.S. Naval

Academy in Annapolis, Maryland, Bill knows firsthand the qualities and dedication that are critical for succeeding at the academies. He provided wise counsel and expertise throughout the nominating process, and I am grateful for his time and commitment.

Bill Ward, Jr. is an outstanding Pennsylvanian and American, as well as an excellent role model for future academy students. On behalf of the 13th District of Pennsylvania, it is my honor to recognize Bill for his service to our community and our nation.

#### HONORING MY CHIEF OF STAFF BRIAN THOMAS

### HON. KENNY MARCHANT

OF TEXAS

IN THE HOUSE OF REPRESENTATIVES

*Thursday, December 17, 2020*

Mr. MARCHANT. Madam Speaker, I rise today to pay tribute to my first and only Chief of Staff, Brian Thomas. I have had the high honor of serving in Congress since 2005, and Brian Thomas has been my right-hand man every step of the way on this amazing journey. Through the good days and the most difficult ones, Brian has been a constant professional and source of wise counsel. I consider myself very fortunate and blessed to have only had one Chief of Staff during my entire service in the House, and I could not have asked for a better man for the job than Brian Thomas. Brian will soon retire as the Dean of the Texas Republican Chiefs of Staff, an honor he has held for the last several years.

Brian's service to the people of his home state of Texas did not start in my office, as he worked for our former colleagues Sam Johnson and Jeb Hensarling, in addition to our current colleague MAC THORNBERRY. Hailing from Denver City, Texas and a graduate of McMurry University in Abilene, Brian never forgot his Texan roots, though he did do two tours outside of the Texas delegation for Charlie Norwood and Chuck Hagel. Brian celebrates a collective twenty-five years of Congressional service this month, a truly outstanding accomplishment that only a small number of Congressional staffers ever reach.

We could not do our jobs without the dedicated service of our staff who are always working behind the scenes. Brian's advice, experience, and especially his hard work, which often occurs at odd hours of the day and night, have all played a large role in helping me best represent the 24th Congressional District.

Brian will be greatly missed by so many upon his retirement as a Congressional staffer. His constant service is something not often found on the Hill, where frequent transitions are the norm. Throughout his career, Brian served as a mentor to staffers in not only my office, but also to those working for other members. No task was ever too big or too small for Brian, from answering the main line of the office telephone, to dealing with intense negotiations with leadership, Brian was always there for me and his colleagues. I hope that in the coming years, Brian's friends and colleagues will continue to ask for his sage advice—once a hill staffer, always a hill staffer.

I congratulate Brian on his remarkable twenty-five years of Congressional service and for leading my Washington, D.C. office for the

people of the 24th Congressional district the last sixteen years. I wish him, his wonderful wife Amy, and their three adorable children, Allie Ross, Jack, and John all the very best for the holiday season and a well-earned Congressional retirement for Brian.

#### RECOGNIZING THE SERVICE OF JOE KRAUS AND MATT PROUTY WITH PROJECT VISION

### HON. PETER WELCH

OF VERMONT

IN THE HOUSE OF REPRESENTATIVES

*Thursday, December 17, 2020*

Mr. WELCH. Madam Speaker, I rise today to honor Joe Kraus and Matt Prouty for their service to Project VISION of Rutland, Vermont. Both Joe and Matt will soon be ending their impressive service to Project VISION after years of success helping Rutland build a better, stronger community.

Formed in 2013 at the height of Rutland's opioid crisis, Project VISION has celebrated two core values since its founding: collaboration for the greater good and focus on the positives that make Rutland a special community. The former Chief of Police for the City of Rutland, James Baker, spearheaded the creation of Project VISION with the enthusiastic support of Mayor Christopher Lours and the Board of Alderman. These leaders recognized that the community's challenges were not going to be fixed by making more arrests, so they sought community partners to build real and substantive change.

With passion and hard work, Joe Kraus and Matt Prouty have helped Project VISION lead a diverse coalition of over 300 social and health service agencies and organizations, who are united in their goal of making Rutland one of the healthiest, safest and happiest places in America. Project VISION's allies include the Rutland Regional Medical Center, the Rutland City Police Department, Rutland City Public Schools, Rutland Regional Planning Commission, NeighborWorks, and the Southwestern Vermont Council on Aging.

In its early years, the coalition concentrated on treating addiction and substance abuse, reducing crime, and building great neighborhoods. Their success was impressive. A survey conducted in Rutland's Northwest neighborhood just three years after Project VISION was founded showed that people felt safer, had a more trusting relationship with law enforcement, and were proud of their neighborhood.

Thanks to the work of Joe and Matt, Project VISION continues to grow. It has expanded its work beyond opioid addiction to address larger health and welfare issues affecting Rutland. Most recently, the organization announced that it would focus on reforming systems that relate to social and racial justice.

I am proud to say that Rutland's future is bright. This is a community that has worked together to accomplish their common vision of a stronger Rutland. My thanks to Joe Kraus and Matt Prouty for stepping forward with energy and commitment to ensure the success of Project VISION. Their work has made a positive difference that will be felt by generations to come.